



Maine Trails Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 31, 2021 – 10:30am – 12:00pm on ZOOM

Present: Mike Grass Jr., Noah Pollack, Tracy Willette, Cathy Small, Dick Howlett, Jane Arbuckle, Jed Talbot, Gabe Perkins, Deb Bowker, John Raymond, Jean Sideris, Robin Kerr, Carey Kish, Kristine Keeney, Lindsey May, Lana LaPlant-Ellis, Rex Turner, Julie Isbill, Eric Dibner, Patrick Adams, Doug Beck.

Absent: Charlie Woodworth, Carolann Ouellette

Guests: Meghan Russo – Maine DOT Legislative Liaison

Call to order

- I. Chair Willette called meeting to order at 10:35 am
- II. Introductions (many new faces)
 - A. Sharing took place noting the attendee's respective organizations, trail user group, and favorite trail.
- III. Recreational Trails Program 101
 - A. Overview- Doug provided a brief overview of RTP and how it works. Funding comes to Maine DOT through an annual apportionment from the Federal Highway Administration as part of all Federal Highway funding to states. Maine DOT then determines how much of the apportionment can be used by Maine DACF Bureau of Parks a& Lands for the Recreational Trails Program. Maine's annual apportionment is over \$1.4 million. DOT has been setting the obligation limit for RTP at \$938,000. Of this amount up to 7% can be used for program administration, up to 5% can be used for trail related Safety and Environmental Protection and the balance can then be used for trail projects. The balance has to be allocated according to a prescribed formula of 30% Motorized, 30% Non-Motorized and 40% Diverse Use. The RTP can reimburse up to 80% of eligible project costs. Grant applications are due in late September with award announcements made in late November.
- IV. New Business
 - A. Elections
 - 1) Vice Chair & Secretary- Tracy opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair & Secretary. A motion was Moved by John Raymond & Seconded by Cathy Small to nominate Jane Arbuckle as Vice Chair and Deb Bowker as Secretary. The motion was unanimously approved.
 - B. By-Laws
 - 1) Revised by-laws distributed in advance – adding a seat on the committee.



- 2) A motion was Moved by Jed Talbot and Seconded by Robin Kerr to replace the Safety & Environmental seat with an Interurban Trail sector seat. The motion was unanimously approved.
 - (a) Interurban Trail sector seat to be filled by Gabe Perkins, of Maine Trail Coalition, pending DACF commissioner approval.

C. RTP funding update

- 1) DOT expects to have a Memorandum of Understanding with DACF formalizing the roles/funding for the Recreational Trails Program by the end of March. It will call for an increase of \$462,000 (almost 50% more) from the current \$938,000 to \$1.4 million. That will fund the program at 98% of the current apportionment level. The MOU is intended to be reviewed after two years. The federal surface transportation funding program that currently sets the apportionment level is set to expire on September 30th, and while DOT can commit to the funding at this level for the next two years, it makes sense to reexamine it within the context of a new federal funding program.
- 2) DOT Bike Ped program received an additional \$700,000 last fall.

V. Funding Overview

A. State side

- 1) LR 1457 - The goal is to increase Maine State funding up to 95% for RTP & Active Transportation.

B. Federal side

- 1) Welch – Curtis Bill – proposal to increase RTP to \$250 million, currently at \$84 million.

VI. Other Business

- A. Spring RTP workshops to be scheduled by Doug**

VII. Sharing – What's new with you and your trail sector?

- A. Robin and Jane noted that parking areas at trailheads are at a premium and quite noticeable during these times. Mt. Agamenticus is building a new parking lot. Julie noted that the National Park Service is available to assist with trail projects, community gardens and they are working on a Penobscot River Trail. John noted that they are working on connectors east and west that would span 3,000 miles in the Millinocket Region.**

VIII. Adjournment / Next Meeting

- A. Next meeting to be scheduled.**